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No. 66.

THE SACRED SHRINE.

BY CRAPE MYRTLE.

Every human heart hath its mystery,
Motive, to itself unknown,
Till life's revealing history
Thrills it with a warning tone;
Full of memories dear and olden,
Lies a little casket golden,
Burst from its native mine,
Hidden deep in earth, only
When the heart is sad and lonely;
Is that sacred shrine.

Only then the seal is broken,
And alone we fondly gaze
On each word and tender token
Left by friends of other days;
Then comes the secret, a seeming
More of touch than blissful dreaming
To the earnest, tearful eyes
That we gaze, with saddened pleasure,
Counting o'er and o'er each treasure
Till the past before us rise.

Till the heart's deep echo ringing
Give us back those words,
And when we hear the singing
Of Hope's golden-pinioned birds
And the weary heart is strengthened,
For its life-path lone, and lengthened
By every joyous hymn
And the spirit strength numbered
With the souls that are numbered
Nevermore with shadows dim.

The Detective's Ward:
OR
THE FORTUNES OF A BOWERY GIRL.

BY AGILE PENNE,
AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL, THE ORANGE GIRL,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.
IN "THE DIVE."

WITH the keen-edged knife glittering in his hand, the Italian, mad with rage, rushed toward the girl.

The rough, seated on the table, and the woman, leaning on the bar, looked on calmly, without stirring a finger to protect the girl, or to save her from the death that seemed so near.

But, as the Italian struck at her, with the quickness of a cat, she jumped to one side, thus evading the murderous stroke. And, as the Italian turned, as if to repeat the rush, she caught up a chair, which stood near at hand. With a strength which one would not have suspected to have dwelt in her slight frame, she whirled the chair over her head and brought it down with terrible force upon the Italian. Jocky threw up his arms to guard his head. The force of the blow hurled him headlong to the floor; but little injured though, for his arms had saved his skull.

The girl then retreated a few steps, still grasping the chair in her hands; still prepared for another attack.

"Set 'em up ag'in!" cried Rocky, in huge delight. "Round two; the old'un goes to grass. Round three; time!"

But the Italian slowly rose to his feet, and showed but little inclination to again renew the attack. The desperation of the girl astonished him.

"Diavolo! you have broke my head!" he cried, in anger.

"Why don't you let me alone, now?" exclaimed the maid, still keeping herself prepared for another assault. Her face deadly white, and the full, red lips shut tightly together.

"Time, Jocky!" shouted the rough; "you ain't a-goin' to give it up so, Mr. Brown, are you?"

"You better let me alone!" the girl cried, her eyes flashing, and her whole manner showing the desperation born of despair.

"Go for her, Jocky!" Rocky exclaimed. "Are you going for to let a girl back you down? Pretty sort of a rooster, you are! I wouldn't bet my stamps on you, nohow." The rough was disgusted, and expressed his feelings in his tones.

"Put down ze chair, you imp of ze devil!" the Italian cried, cautiously advancing toward the still defiant girl.

"I won't!" she answered. "I give you fair warning that, if you attempt to strike me, I'll hit you with it again." In the eye of the girl the Italian read that she would keep her word, or, at least, attempt to do so.

"Come, Jocky, the audience is a-gettin' impatient!" exclaimed the rough. "If you ain't a-goin' to put up your bunch of fives, you'd better throw up the sponge and quit to onct'. I'd be ashamed for to have a girl back me down, I would!"

"If you no put down ze chair, diavolo! I will kill you!" cried the Italian, fiercely.

"You tried it on onct', and you didn't do it!" the girl replied, still defiant. "You better not try it again. You've got my temper up, an' I had just as lief die now as not. This ends you and me. I don't stay here no more!"

The girl made a movement toward the door, but the Italian quickly anticipated her motion and placed himself before it.

"You no go!" he cried, in rage.

"Well, now, this is interesting!" said the rough, complacently. "Now hit him over the head with the cheer, 'cos you can't git out till you do!"

"What! you tell her to hit me over ze head viz ze chair?" cried the Italian, in astonishment.

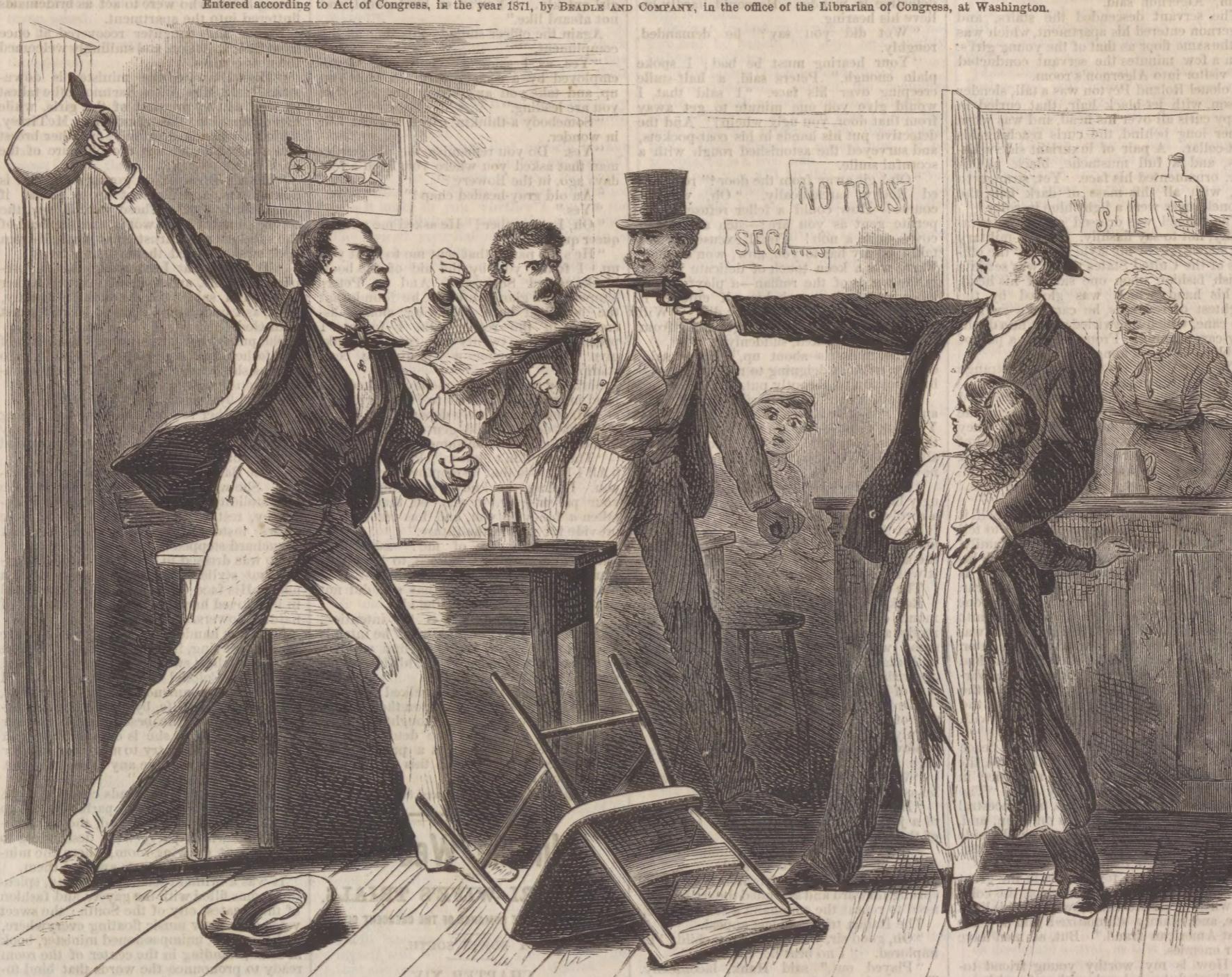
"In course; what a feller you are, for to want to spill the fun!" said the rough, in an aggrieved tone.

"Rocky, I gives you one dollar to take ze chair away from this devil's imp!" exclaimed the Italian, glaring upon the girl.

"Have you bought your coffin?" asked Hank, stretching his brawny arms out, carelessly, and approaching the rough.

Rocky measured Hank with his eye; took in the muscular power that evidently laid in the well-developed sinews of the detective's powerful frame, and slowly retreated toward the bar, as if in search of a weapon.

"You jes' teach your grandmother to milk



"I'll give you just one minute to get away from that door, my friend," Peters said, calmly, not a trace of agitation in his voice.

"What ze devil you want here, eh?" asked the Italian, in surly anger. He was not pleased with the appearance of the strangers, and guessed that they were intent on mischief.

"Well, our wants are easily explained and easily satisfied," Peters said, quietly.

"In the first place we want this girl."

Had a bombshell exploded in that underground saloon it could hardly have created more excitement.

The rough stared; the Italian uttered a fearful oath; the girl took a step forward, with clasped hands, and even the wife of the Italian, behind the counter, manifested some emotion.

"You want zis girl?" the Italian demanded in wonder.

"That's the programme!" Peters replied, coolly.

"You can't have her!" cried Rocky, defiantly.

"Gorgeous individual, just you keep your ear out until you're asked to row," said the detective, provokingly.

"Look a-here, now; you'll git hurt afair if you kin git out of this now!" cried Rocky, in indignant warning.

"I wonder how thick this wall is here?"

said Peters, interrogatively. Do you think it would damage it much if you knocked that fellow through it into the next basement?"

"Spose I try," and Hank made a step toward the rough.

The rough seized the heavy water-pitcher that stood on the counter.

"Now, you jes' keep away!" he cried, in anger.

"You take my child away? Diavolo!" exclaimed the Italian.

"Your child? How long since?" asked Peters, in contempt.

"Oh, don't believe him, sir; I ain't his child!" cried the girl, quickly. "He's called me a beggar's brat every so many times, and, jes' as you came in now, he swore he was a-goin' to kill me!"

"She tell one big lie!" exclaimed the Italian.

"Don't you believe him, sir. It ain't a lie; it's the truth, sir!" protested the girl.

Peters took the memorandum-book from his pocket and glanced over the description of the girl he was in search of.

"She answers to it," he muttered. "I say, my girl, did you tell a gentleman on the Bowery a few days ago where you lived?"

"Yes, sir," answered the girl, eagerly.

"Then you're the one I want."

"You want my child! You no take her!" cried the Italian.

"Don't talk so much with your mouth!" said Hank, tersely, to the Italian.

"Don't you let 'em take her away, Jocky!" cried the rough. "Putty piece of business for to take a man's own gal away!"

"Do you want to go with us?" Peters asked, addressing the girl.

"Yes," she answered, eagerly. "I would rather die than stay here. I'll go anywhere with you. Jocky, here, alters beats me, but I made up my mind to-night that he shouldn't beat me any more, and when he tried to, I knocked him down first with my fist, and then with the chair," said the girl, proudly.

Peters looked at her in astonishment. The detective had met with many strange characters in his career; but this girl was something out of the common run of the Arabs of the street.

"She no go!" cried the Italian, fiercely. "She my child! I no let her go. You take her away I sell call ze police—put you in ze Tomb, diavolo!"

"That's right; stick to it, Jocky!" said the rough, encouragingly. "Who are these two fellers, I'd like for to know, that come to take away an honest man's girl!"

The Italian had hid his knife away at the commencement of the conversation, and now, with both hands outstretched, he sprang forward as if to seize the girl; but he stopped suddenly in his onward motion for the girl, with flushing eyes and clenched teeth, drew back her arm as if to strike. The Italian had felt the force of her little knuckles once before and did not care to encounter them again.

"She no go!" cried the Italian, fiercely. "She my child! I no let her go. You take her away I sell call ze police—put you in ze Tomb, diavolo!"

"Exactly; you're astonished of course. I know I was," said Algernon, grimly.

"But I never heard him speak of a daughter before!"

"No, nor anybody else. You can judge how astonished I was. But the old gentleman was in sober earnest. His manner told pretty plain that he wasn't joking. So, you see, my nose is out of joint."

"Oh! how dreadful!" and the girl looked, pathetically, into the face of Algernon.

"I should say it was, and then, on the top of this pleasant information, he gave me a bit of advice, and that concerns you."

"Why, what did he say about me?" Dolly asked, in wonder.

"Not much about you, in person," Algernon replied. "He simply told me that I mustn't make love to you."

"I wonder if he suspects that we are engaged?" and a blush mottled the cheeks and forehead of the girl.

"No, but he's evidently afraid that something of that sort will happen."

"What did you say?" Dolly asked, anxiously.

"Nothing; what the deuce could I say. It was bad enough to have him coolly inform me that I needn't expect to inherit any of his fortune, without being warned against falling in love with the girl that I was already engaged to. I was so taken aback, I couldn't say anything at all," Algernon said, dismally.

"But, why does he object?"

"Don't ask me! I can't tell you! Some whim that he has taken into his head."

"I feel that when I tell him how much we love each other, he won't object."

"I wouldn't say any thing at present!" Algernon exclaimed, quickly.

Then a ring at the door-bell sounded through the house.

"I think that's some one for me. I expect Colonel Peyton to call this afternoon. He's a deuced clever fellow, and I'll ask his advice in regard to this matter."

"I was going down to sit with your uncle a little while, but I don't feel like it now," Dolly said, with a mournful face. "If he looked at me, I know I should burst out

crying. Come and see me as soon as your visitor goes."

"Yes, I will. I think you had better not let uncle know that I have told you what he said; he might be angry."

"I'll go and shut myself up in my room. Oh, dear, I feel so miserable, Alger. I think that it's mean for your uncle to object to our loving each other!"

Then Dolly retreated quickly, and sought shelter in her room. She cast herself upon the bed with a sigh, and buried her face in the pillows, as though by the act she would blot out the memory of the world and all its cares.

Leaving the girl to her reflections, we will return to Algernon.

The young man stood at the head of the stairs, waiting to see if the servant would ascend with a message to him.

He was not disappointed in his thought, that the visitor was for him, for in a few moments the servant brought him up a card. On the card was written:

"Colonel Roland Peyton."

"Show him up, James, please—to my room," Algernon said.

The servant descended the stairs, and Algernon entered his apartment, which was on the same floor as that of the young girl's.

In a few minutes the servant conducted the visitor into Algernon's room.

Colonel Roland Peyton was a tall, slender person, with jet-black hair, that curled in crispy curls all over his head, and was worn rather long behind, the curls reaching his coat-collar. A pair of luxuriant side-whiskers, and a full mustache, black as his hair, ornamented his face. Yet, strange to say, with all this mass of dark hair, the colonel's eyes were a light blue in color.

The colonel was dressed a little extravagantly, not to say flashy. A semi-military hat, something of the style worn by the officers of the United States army, was set in a rakish fashion upon one side of his head. In his hand, which was gloved by the brightest of red kid, he carried a switch-like cane, which he twirled about in a devil-may-care manner. From his neck a pair of double eye-glasses hung.

The face of the colonel was a strange mixture of the gentleman and the bully.

On Broadway a detective officer would have picked him out instantly for one of the gentry "who toll not, neither do they spin," but who make a living by the aid of nimble fingers and a pack of cards. A gentleman who always aids fortune by holding a good hand, or always throwing sixes," as the French say.

As for the colonel's account of himself, it was simple, and he never hesitated to tell it. The son of a wealthy Virginia family, he was reared as a gentleman should be. At the age of twenty he visited Europe. It was just at the time of the Crimean war. He enlisted in the English service—was one of the famous "six hundred" who rode into the jaws of death at Balaklava, and was one of the few who escaped the slaughter. Then, during the war for the Union, he had commanded a regiment under Lee in Virginia, and acted an important part in all the terrible fights which reddened the soil of the "mother of States and statesmen" with human blood.

And now that the white wings of peace once more were spread over the land, the ex-colonel had taken up his residence in New York. As he carelessly said, "The South has gone to the dogs, my ancestral acres won't sell for the taxes on them, and as I like New York, in future I shall reside at the North. I bear no malice for the past. A noble foe, sir, I respect, by Jove!"

There were some few people in the great metropolis who looked askance at the colonel when he passed them, swinging his light cane, and plainly stigmatized him as "the great American fraud." But, all men have their enemies.

"How is my worthy young friend today?" cried the colonel, with a flourish, as he entered the room.

"I'm feeling deuced badly!" replied Algernon. "Sit down, colonel, and take a cigar."

"Ah, thank you!" The gentleman accepted both the cigar and the chair. "Ah! there's nothing like a good cigar for enjoyment," he exclaimed, as he lighted the fragrant "weed." "I love to watch the perfumed smoke curling, like holy incense, up to heaven!" said the colonel, with a wave of the hand. "But, why does my Damon feel ill at ease? Let him confide in his Pythias."

"You know, of course, that I have always expected to become my uncle's heir? I've spoken about it to you."

"You have, many a time and oft, on the Rialto!" said the colonel, theatrically.

"Well, if you had expected all your life to come in some day for about two hundred thousand dollars, and then should suddenly discover that you had about as much chance of it as the man in the moon, wouldn't it rather annoy you?"

"Perhaps, upon some, it would have that effect. When I say some, I mean nearly all the world. But, to a man like myself, you know, who has been used to the ups and downs of fortune, why, it would be a mere trifle. Ah! my dear boy, when, like me, you have rode into the very jaws of death, 'cannon to the right, cannon to the left,' before you the whole Russian army, you will be able to hold your own."

"Let me know when that happens, will you?" Peters rejoined. "I'd like to be round when that little affair takes place. Good-by; I'm sorry I can't stop any longer. I'll come and see you some other time; by-bye!"

The door closed, behind the two. They ascended the stairs, regardless of the curses that followed them from the baffled villains.

The girl was waiting on the sidewalk at the top of the stairs.

"Come right along with us," Peters said, kindly, as he gained the pavement.

"Yes, sir," the girl replied, a bright smile on her pale features, and a glad light shining in her great dark eyes.

The three proceeded along down the Bowery.

"Now, then, my girl, I must have a little talk with you," Peters said. "What is your name?"

"Lill, sir, though almost everybody calls me the Bowery Girl," she replied.

"What's the reason of that?"

"Because I sells things, sir, on that street, I suppose."

"Are your father and mother living?"

"Never had any," was the singular reply.

"No father or mother?"

"No, sir; none that I ever heard tell on."

"How you always lived with this man?"

"Yes, sir."

"But he's not your father."

"Oh, no, sir!" the girl replied, quickly.

"He's often cursed me for a beggar's brat. If I was his child he wouldn't treat me as bad as he does."

"You must have had a pretty hard time of it," the detective said. Even his nature hardened as it was by constant contact with crime and its votaries, felt a great degree of pity for the Bowery Girl.

"Oh, I have, sir, lots of hard times!" the girl said, earnestly. "I've been running in the streets, a-sellings things for Jocky, ever since I've been able to walk. I've allers let him beat me without saying a word, but, somehow, he got my mad up to-night—I've got a temper of my own sometimes—and I didn't care whether I lived or died."

"Then, you are perfectly willing to leave this man and come with me?" Peters asked, feeling quite a strong sentiment of admiration for the girl's spirit.

"Willing to go with you?" exclaimed the girl quickly. "You bet I am!"

CHAPTER VI.

OUT OF THE DARK.

"HALLO!" exclaimed Peters, as he surveyed the threatening demonstrations, "are you insane enough to imagine that you can prevent me from leaving this place?"

"You shan't take the gal, nowow!" Rocky replied, defiantly. "You kin git out yourself, jes' as soon as you like. Your room's a good deal better nor your company."

"You no take my gal!" exclaimed the Italian, in wrath, brandishing the glittering knife as he spoke.

"If we leave the girl, you'll let us go, then?" Peters asked, quietly.

"Jes as soon as you like; the sooner the better!" replied the rough; "and you kin thank your lucky stars that you don't git a head put on you for poking your nose into other people's business."

The face of the girl grew paler and paler; she fancied that the men who had come so timely to her aid were now about to desert her, frightened by the threats of the rough.

She knew little of the iron wills of the officers.

"I'll give you just one minute to get away from that door, my friend," Peters said, calmly, not a trace of agitation in his voice.

A long breath of relief came from the lips of the child-woman, and the rigid muscles of her face relaxed. Her quick instant told her that there was yet hope of escape.

Rocky looked into the stolid face of the detective in wonder. He could hardly believe his hearing.

"Wat did you say?" he demanded, roughly.

"Your hearing must be bad; I spoke plain enough," Peters said, a half-smile creeping over his face. "I said that I would give you one minute to get away from that door, you ugly whelp!" And the detective put his hands in his coat-pockets, and surveyed the astonished rough with a scornful smile.

"Oh! git away from the door?" responded Rocky, sarcastically. "Oh, yes, in course! How could a feller refuse sich a perle gent as you are?—sich a polished come—quite a nob! You'll excuse my not takin' off my hat to you, now, won't you?"

There was a keen touch of delicate humor in the words of the ruffian—a playful badimage which the rough himself enjoyed if no one else of the company did. "Will you hold your breath till I git away from this door?" he asked, suddenly.

"The minute's about up," Peters said, calmly, without deigning to reply to the polite question so abruptly put.

"Well, wat if it is?" cried Rocky, defiantly. "Wat are you a-goin' to do about it?"

You don't pose you kin talk me away from this door, do you? You ain't sich a flat as all that! Wat are you a-goin' for to do now, say?"

"Put a bullet through your head, you ugly brute!" cried Peters, suddenly drawing a revolver from his pocket and leveling it full at the head of the rough. At the same moment Hank, by a dextrous kick, knocked the life out of the Italian's hand and sent it whizzing against the wall.

The tables were turned completely.

Rocky glared in astonishment into the mouth of the little shining tube leveled directly at his head, while the old Italian stood with outstretched arms, speechless with rage. The face of the girl brightened up with joy as she beheld the discomfiture of her persecutors.

"Drop that pitcher, or I'll blow the whole top of your ugly head off!" cried Peters, sternly, addressing the rough.

Slowly Rocky lowered his hand, in sullen rage.

"Would you go for to murder a cove?" he asked, doggedly.

"It would only be cheating the hangman of a job," Peters replied. "Now stand out of the way!"

Slowly Rocky obeyed the command.

"Go ahead, girl," Peters said.

With a bound like a frightened deer, she sprang forward and ascended the stairs. No need to repeat the command a second time. The Italian tried one last appeal.

"Oh, good sir, you no take my child?" he implored.

"Played out," said Hank, laconically.

The meaning of the terse sentence was perfectly plain, even to the foreign ears of the Streets puzzled him.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 65.)

A peculiar sort of expression came over the shrewd face of the detective at the "slang" used by the girl. The words grated on his ear, coming from girlish lips. Lill's eyes were quick; she detected the smile in an instant, and guessed that, in some way, she had displeased her protector.

"Wat's the matter sir?" she asked. "I hope I ain't said nothing that I hadn't ought to!"

"No, no! Of course not!" replied the detective, feeling a little guilty. "What makes you think so?"

"Why, I seed it in your face," she said.

"Oh my eyes are precious sharp ones. I said something that you didn't like. I wouldn't do that for anything in this world."

The earnest tones of the girl told that she spoke the truth. "You're the first one that ever took my part, and I'd do anything for you, I would. Jes you try me and see!"

Peters could not help smiling at the maid's earnest way.

"Well, my girl, I am only acting as agent for somebody else. I am a detective officer."

"Do you know I thought so?" cried the girl quickly.

"You're so kinder cool, and not afraid like."

Again the officer smiled—this time at the compliment.

"Yes, as I said," he replied. "I am employed by a certain party to hunt you up, and take you away from this life that you are leading."

"Somebody a-thinkin' of me?" cried Lill in wonder.

"Yes. Do you remember the old gentleman that asked you where you lived a few days ago, in the Bowery?"

"An old gray-headed chap?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I remember! He asked me a lot of queer questions."

"He's the party that sent me to hunt you up. I found you, by the aid of the boot-black named Shrimpy." And as Peters happened to glance around, he found that the boy had been following along, discreetly, in the rear. "Oh, I forgot; I promised him twenty-five cents. Hank, give the youngster a twenty-five cent stamp."

Shrimpy received the money, ducked his head in acknowledgment to Peters, grinned at Lill, and immediately departed.

"What does this old gent want of me?" asked the girl in astonishment.

"That I don't know," Peters replied. "All I know is that he employed me to find you. Perhaps he knows something about your parents; or, it may be, that he has taken a fancy to you, and has resolved to provide for you in the future."

"Wat's the party that sent me to hunt you up. I found you, by the aid of the boot-black named Shrimpy." And as Peters happened to glance around, he found that the boy had been following along, discreetly, in the rear. "Oh, I forgot; I promised him twenty-five cents. Hank, give the youngster a twenty-five cent stamp."

Shrimpy received the money, ducked his head in acknowledgment to Peters, grinned at Lill, and immediately departed.

"Good-by, papá," she whispered.

He drew her to him tenderly, and kissing her, repeatedly exclaimed: "Good-by, my little pet, and God in his mercy bless and protect you."

Adele Bartmore felt very much like weeping.

She was much given to tears, but the stiff stolidity of her companion, Miss McTivsey, restrained her, and so there were smiles instead of weeping when Mark Blanchard stepped lightly into the room.

He was dressed in a suit of black, lusterless but stylish, and looked every inch a man. His face was wreathed in smiles, and in his gloved hand he held a rich bouquet of natural flowers.

These he handed, with a graceful bow, to Blanche, saying, in an undertone, "This is as it should be, 'sweets to the sweet.'" Then, turning to Colonel Davenant, he said: "I hope to make amends for my past idle pleasure-seeking life, by a lifetime of constant devotion to the best interests of your daughter. And if she only as happy in the future as I shall try to make her, neither you nor she shall have any cause to regret this evening's ceremony."

The two men shook hands cordially; just then the musicians in the parlor struck up "The Wedding March" and the next moment, the whole party were descending to the brilliant drawing-room, where the minister and assembled guests awaited them.

It was a brilliant scene. The long, slender rooms filled with the gayety and fashion of the greatest city of the South; the sweet voice of mellow music floating everywhere, and the calm, unimpassioned minister, book in hand, standing in the center of the room ready to pronounce the words that bind together two persons for good or evil.

The bridal party slowly approached the center of the apartment. Blanche was leaning upon the arm of her father, while the eager eyes of old Gabriel Blanchard followed her from the remotest corner. This is what he had struggled for so long and now his plans were about to be consummated; his nephew and heir would, in a few moments, be the husband of the only child of his most intimate friend. He arose, and, leaning on his staff, tottered forward until he had almost touched the elbow of his bride.

Then there was a calm—a calm so deep that the breathing of the audience could be distinctly heard.

The minister lifted his eyes from the floor, and surveyed the company with one sweeping glance. Then he said, in a deep voice:

"If anybody knows aught why this man and this woman should not be joined in holy wedlock, let them speak now—"

"Yes, I am sad, because this is the last time that I shall ever feel the touch of your arms, the last time that my head will ever lay on your breast. Estevan, I have come to bid you farewell!" Mournful, indeed, were the tones of Nanon's voice, and her deep emotion almost choked her utterance.

"Come to bid me farewell?" the officer exclaimed, in astonishment. Although when the fair French girl had first appeared to him and announced that she had followed him from Orleans, in his heart he grieved at her coming; but, now that she was about to leave, a feeling of regret came over him.

"Yes, a long farewell, for it is—forever!" she replied.

"Forever! Do you mean that you will never see me again, Nanon?" he asked.

"Yes."

"But, why this sudden change in the state of your feelings toward me?" he questioned, in astonishment.

"I have not changed, Estevan," she said, slowly and sadly. "Even at this moment, when my lips are about to speak the words that signify that we are to part, never to meet again, I love you more deeply than I have ever done, even when all seemed bright before us, and we looked forward to a long future of joy."

"Your words are strange; I can not understand them," Estevan said.

"Fate parts us, not my will," she replied, mournfully.

"Explain."

"You remember the simple story of my life?"

"Yes, partly."

"I was reared in a convent until I was eighteen; six months ago I was taken from the seclusion of the cloister by the man—the agent of my unknown father—who had looked after my welfare since I was a child. I met you—loved you. I told you, frankly, of the mystery that encircled me. You did not heed it, but declared that you loved me, and still would love me, no matter who or what my parents were."

"Yes, what matters it to me?" Estevan cried, quickly.

"It was like your noble heart," Nanon said, gazing with eyes lustrious with tenderness, upon the Spaniard's face. "I followed you from Orleans here; with me came the man who has been like a father to me since my earliest remembrances. This man has discovered the motive that brought me here. He seeks to crush the love that is in my heart for you. Failing in all other ways, as a last resource, he revealed to me the secret of my birth."

"And that secret?" questioned Estevan,

"Must separate us forever," replied the girl, tears starting in her dark eyes; and then, unable to restrain her emotion, she buried her face upon her lover's breast.

"I can not understand why that should separate us!" exclaimed the Spaniard, in astonishment.

"When you know who and what I am, you will understand," said Nanon, sadly, raising her head and gazing once again into the face of her lover.

"Tell me, then, the truth!"

"Who is the man most feared and detested in all the region washed by the waters of the Gulf? Speak the name that is greeted with curses and maledictions from the lips of all honest men, and you will pronounce the name of my father."

"Surely, you can not mean—"

"The Terror of the Gulf? The man whose hand is red with blood, whose soul is stained with crime? Yes, I mean him!"

"Your father then is—"

"Lafitte, the Pirate," moaned the poor girl, sadly.

"The dreaded sea rover your father?"

"Yes; that is the barrier that rises like a dark wall between you and me. You came of a noble Spanish family. You can not soil the honor of your race by uniting your fate with the daughter of the buccaneer. And if your love was strong enough to bid you overleap the obstacle, my passion is deep enough not to accept the sacrifice. I would give—I know not what—but everything that we poor humans call dear in this world, to rest one little hour in your arms, your wedded wife. But it can not—must not be! Here we part forever and forever!" The expression of agony in the voice of the hapless girl was deep indeed.

"Why, Nanon, I have met your father within the last few hours. This wound on my cheek comes from his hand. Even now the pirate Lafitte is a prisoner in the guard-house of the fort."

"My father?" cried Nanon, in amazement.

"If thy father is Lafitte, the Terror of the Gulf, he is our prisoner. But I can not believe that this man is thy father. He can not be ten years older than myself—a young man."

"Yes; Baptiste told me that he was not old."

"Baptiste?"

"Yes, Antoine Baptiste. He is the protector who has watched over me since childhood. It was he who told me the secret of my birth, in order to separate me from you."

"To separate you from me!" said Estevan in astonishment. "Why should he wish to do that?"

For a moment Nanon cast down her eyes in agitation; then when she raised them again to the face of Estevan, a burning blush swept over her pale features.

"He loves me," she said, slowly.

"Loves thee! and that is the reason why he told thee that thou wert the daughter of Lafitte? I do not believe it."

"I feel that it is the truth," Nanon said, sadly.

"We can easily discover whether it is or not!" Estevan exclaimed. "To-morrow you shall visit Lafitte in his prison. If he is thy father, he will not deny it. You will speedily learn the truth."

As Estevan spoke, he carelessly paced across the room, passing near the window. Then, on the still night air, rang out the sharp report of a pistol-shot. With a cry, Estevan staggered, and then fell senseless to the floor. Some concealed foe, ambushed amid the foliage of the garden, had shot him through the window.

With a cry of agony, Nanon sprung to the side of the fallen man. Eagerly she sought for traces of the wound. On the temple, just by the roots of the hair, came a faint line of blood, that marked the track of the assassin's bullet. By a hair's breadth only had the Spanish captain escaped from death. The ball had plowed its way through the glossy curls of the Spaniard, just grazing the skin, and that was all.

A cry of joy broke from the lips of the girl when she discovered the nature of the wound. Soon Estevan's senses returned. He opened his eyes and gazed around him

with an expression of wonder. At first, memory was a blank, but gradually the remembrance of the events of the last few minutes came back to him.

He rose to his feet, and drew a long breath. The Spaniard had served in some hard-fought campaigns, but had never been hard to death before.

"By the Virgin!" he cried, with a shiver, as he thought by what a miracle he had escaped: "the aim of that fellow was a true one. But who can it be that seeks to assassinate me?" Then, to the mind of the captain, came the remembrance of the sudden disappearance of the tall Yankee, the friend of the American, from the forest glade. "I understand, now," he said, "this is a friend of your reputed father, Lafitte, who has attempted my life in revenge for the capture of his leader."

"You and my father, then, have met as enemies?" Nanon asked, with a shudder of fear.

"Yes; that is, if the man be your father. But, Nanon, I cannot believe that to be the truth. You say that this protector—your father's agent—loves you. May he not have devised this story to separate us?" Estevan asked.

"It is possible; and yet I do not think that he would deceive me," Nanon said, turning to him.

"A man in love will do a great many things that else he would not have dreamed of," Estevan replied. "To-morrow you shall learn the truth. Come at two in the afternoon. You shall see this man, and learn whether he be his child or not. I cannot believe that he is your father."

"Till to-morrow, then, adieu," she said. With a sudden impulse, Estevan caught the girl in his arms and for a moment held her to his heart. Then Nanon released herself, and glided from the room.

Estevan watched the door close behind her—a peculiar expression upon his face.

"What magic charm is there in this girl's nature that makes me love her when she is with me?" he asked thoughtfully, communing with himself. "At times I wish that I had never looked upon her face; that is, when she is absent; but, in her presence, the old-time witchery comes over me, and I feel as if I could give up all the world for her sake. What a fool I am!" he cried, suddenly, pacing up and down the room, with a restless step. "Everything bids me separate myself from this girl, and crush out the foolish passion that her face has given life to in my heart. Why did I not let her go, instead of striving to detain her? At present the chance to wed the heiress, Isabel, is good. My rival is in captivity, denounced as the pirate Lafitte. I had an idea, when he first appeared here, that he was one of the buccaneer's gang, but did not think that he was Lafitte in person. His doom is sealed if my father holds to his purpose. Isabel, too, when she learns that the man she loves is the dreaded 'Terror of the Gulf,' must shrink from him in loathing. 'I do not seek your life,' the soldier said, gravely. 'I would rather aid your escape than see you fall by the bullets of my men. I have offered you fairly. Blame your own folly if you perish like a dog.'

"You have some reason for not wishing me to die," the sailor said, suddenly.

The Spaniard started at the words; a troubled look swept over his face, and he avoided the earnest gaze of the American.

"Senor commandante, two objects brought me to Pensacola: first, to win the girl I loved, your ward, Isabel Morena, and thus redeem the pledge I gave to her years ago; second, to unravel the tangled skein of mystery that conceals the secret of my birth. I think that you know something of that secret. Is it not so? Is not that the reason why you would rather aid my escape than see me die?"

The commandante bit his lip convulsively. His powerful frame for a moment shook with agitation; but answer made he none. He took the lantern from the table, and proceeded to the door.

"You will not answer my question?" Rupert cried.

"I can not; how can I speak of what I do not know?" asked the Spaniard, turning and facing his prisoner. And, as he spoke, even to himself the tones of his voice sounded hollow and unnatural.

"You are deceiving me!" the sailor cried, in contempt.

"How would you like to receive a visit from my ward, Isabel, before you die?" asked the commandante, suddenly, as though striving to change the subject of the conversation.

"Her presence would be as welcome to me as the sight of land to the ocean-tossed mariner!" cried Rupert, eagerly. "But no; you are jesting with me. You will not let her visit me in my dungeon."

"I do not jest," said the commandante, gravely. "If she wishes to come, she can; I will interpose no objection; nay, more, I will tell her that you are here, and that she can visit you if she so desires."

"I thank you for the favor, even though you send me to death the moment the interview is over!" exclaimed the sailor, warmly.

"Is there any thing else that you desire?" asked the Spaniard, lingering at the door as though he were unwilling to depart.

"Nothing."

"Within an hour Isabel will come."

The door closed behind the stately figure of the Spanish officer. Rupert heard the harsh grating sound made by the heavy bolts as they shot into their sockets. He was alone in the gloom. Alone, to dream of the bliss of once more holding within his arms the woman that he loved so well.

The commandante, after giving orders to the sergeant to keep a diligent watch upon the prisoner, descended to the barrack-yard.

"She will not believe you," the sailor said, smiling. She has too much faith in me. She knows me now as Rupert Vane. Years ago, when first we met, I had another appellation. When you tell her that I am the pirate, and ask her to cast away the love for me that is in her heart, she will believe that you speak falsely, and that it is for your son's sake you utter the falsehood."

The Spaniard remained silent for a moment. In his heart he knew that the American can speak the truth.

"Why not accept my offer? Take life and freedom, and leave this girl," the commandante exclaimed, impatiently. "There are other maidens in the world as fair as she."

"My eyes have never looked upon them," the sailor replied.

"One hand, life, freedom; on the other, death! You are a madman to hesitate, even for a moment!" The anxiety of the Spaniard was plainly visible.

"I have pledged my faith unto Isabel; I will meet death unflinchingly rather than break that pledge," the sailor said, firmly.

"You are mad indeed!" the commandante exclaimed.

"No—only honest. Besides, I am not dead yet, nor do I see the soldiers drawn out, with their shining muskets leveled at my heart. There's many a slip between the cup and the lip. One how makes me your prisoner—the next may see me free again. The wheel of fortune turns ever; she is a fickle goddess. If she frown on me now, soon may she smile."

"You do not despair, then?" asked the Spaniard, in wonder.

"On, now will I until I see the flash of the powder that drives the balls that bring me death," replied the sailor, carelessly.

A moment the Spaniard looked into the fearless face of his prisoner; then dropped his eyes to earth and seemed lost in thought.

By the dim light which the lantern gave, the sailor surveyed the massive features of the old soldier—a peculiar expression upon his face. And as he looked thoughtfully, he pushed back the curls that clustered over his bronzed forehead, as though by the act would quicken the motion of his brain.

"Strange how familiar the face of this

man is to me," he murmured, lowly, to himself. "Can he know aught of the mystery that clouds all my early life? If I have never seen him in the past, why should his face recall remembrances of that past? It is a riddle; shall I ever solve it?"

Suddenly the commandante raised his eyes once again to the face of the young man.

"I will give you until to-morrow morning to reflect upon the offer I have made you. If you do not accept, at six in the morning, what a respite you give me!" said the sailor, smiling. "You will be spared the pain of again hearing me refuse your offer."

"Ah! in the morning you will accept!" cried the old man, eagerly.

"No; on the contrary, in the morning I shall be free," replied Rupert, calmly.

The commandante looked at the sailor with wonder in his face. The coolness of the rorer stupefied him.

"You will escape? Impossible!"

"Do not be too sure of that. I have a presentation that I shall not see the morning light peep in through yonder barred window."

The Spaniard seized the lantern, and advancing to the window, examined the thick iron bars that guarded it; tried each one with his hand. All were secure in their places.

"You cannot escape from here unless by a miracle," the commandante exclaimed, turning to Rupert.

"Fortune may work that miracle for me; but one thing I can not understand: why are you so eager to have me accept your offer and depart? What difference does it make to you whether I am in the land of the living or under the green sod?"

The men of your nation are not wont to be merciful to their foes."

"I do not seek your life," the soldier said, gravely. "I would rather aid your escape than see you fall by the bullets of my men."

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"I thank you for the favor, even though you send me to death the moment the interview is over!" exclaimed the sailor, warmly.

"Within an hour it will be solved. I shall go to Isabel at once. I have promised the sailor that Isabel shall be allowed to sleep with him to-night."

Estevan gazed at his father in amazement.

"What? Father, are you mad?" he cried. "Do you not see, that, if you let them see each other, it will but strengthen them in their resolutions?"

"No," the father replied, shaking his head, gravely. "It will be a final meeting. Once they part it will be forever."

"It is through her love for this man that I shall win her consent to give him up," the commandante rejoined.

"I can not guess the riddle."

"Within an hour Isabel will come."

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AN ODD SONG!

BY JOS. F. MORAN.

You may roam this world o'er from one end to the other—
But you'll never find one man look just like another—
Although you may tread every foot of its sod,
No two faces you'll find just alike, which is odd—
Oh, how very odd—indeed it is odd!—
Philosophical friend, don't you think it is odd?

My judicious friend, don't you think it was odd?
Yet there is another chap here in this city
Who looks so much like me that it was a great pity
We weren't born one, for this son of a gun!—
A great deal of mischief toward me he has done—
Which was very odd—indeed it was odd!

My judicious friend, don't you think it was odd?
I was courting a girl who was called Kitty Ferry,
She had cheeks like the rose and lips like a cherry.
Her form it was fair and her beauty was rare,
But the other young man not short of me there!
Now what's that odd odd—I need it is odd!

Considerate friend, don't you think it was odd?
I often thought it was odd,
And she always appeared very partial to me;
So one evening I went upon the purpose intent
To ask if to marry me she would consent.
And I felt very odd—indeed I felt odd!

Sentimental friend, don't you think it was odd?
When I went in the parlor, there, what met my view
But this other young man, and he courting her, too!
I asked her the reason she treated me thus;
Said she liked you 'cause you looked just like
Gus!—

And again I felt odd—indeed very odd!
Sympathizing friend, don't you think I felt odd?
I must have said something that didn't just suit,
For this young man he up with the toe of his boot
And gave me such a kick that it made me feel sick!—
And I left the house wishing them both to Old Nick!
Which was all very odd—indeed it was odd—
But I thought at the time that 'twas almost too odd!

The Lettre de Cachet.

BY C. D. CLARK.

EMILE DU MARTIN was in his office, in the Jeweler's quartier of the great city of Paris. He was a man yet young and was known far and near as the earnest and open advocate of the rights of the people against the more powerful. He sat at his desk looking over some accounts, when the door opened and a lady came in. Her dress had once been rich, but was now worn and faded, and her manner bespoke her one of high birth and education. She approached the desk of the merchant, and, lifting her veil, showed a face of such wonderful beauty that the young man started and looked at her fixedly, for he felt that this was a woman for whom a man could even dare to die.

"Monsieur Du Martin," she said, "I have been directed to you, as a man who will deal justly with the unfortunate, and who is a judge of jewelry. Will you kindly look at this?"

She laid a small package upon the desk, and began to open it.

"Mademoiselle has not, I hope, been deceived in me," he said, politely. "I will deal justly with every one, when I can see my duty plainly."

The package was now open, and revealed a necklace of diamonds and rubies, of great value.

"In sorrow and misfortune I have still clung to this," she said, raising the jewel to her lips, "but I can hold out no longer. Monsieur, you know the value of jewels; can you tell me the worth of this?"

"I should be able, mademoiselle," he said, looking at her keenly, "since I made it myself."

"You! Then you know—"

"To whom it was sold: *certainement*. It was made to order for the daughter of Count de St. Verein, four years ago. It was sold for fifty thousand francs. What is your wish with regard to this necklace?"

"Ask me no questions! Look at me, and then say whether a person in such poor garb should possess a necklace worth fifty thousand francs."

"Excuse me; did you wish to sell it?"

"No; to pawn it. How much dare you advance on this pledge?"

"To you, the full value of the necklace," he said. "Pardon my presumption when I say that I know both what you are, and what your history is. Yours has been a life early crushed by fatal circumstances, beyond your power to explain away, and yet you are guiltless of wrong as I am."

"You have a noble heart, Monsieur Du Martin. May the saints be with you when your hour of trial comes. Since you are so kind, I will take one-half the price of the necklace, and leave the jewel in pledge. With this money, we hope to regain our ancient place, and prove to the satisfaction of the king that we have been greatly wronged."

He drew a book toward him and wrote a *billet de banque* for a large sum and gave it to her.

"You have made a mistake, Monsieur. This is for fifty thousand francs."

"You will need it all," he said, hastily.

"As for the jewel, you had better take it with you, for I do not need it."

"You must have something in pledge for this money."

"I can not take it. Or stay; if you will leave me something, let it be the ring you wear, if it is not a keepsake."

"It is of little value," she said, drawing it from her finger. "Yet, take it, for something tells me that it may be of use to you in after days. If you are ever in trouble, and have no other way of escape, send this ring to the king, stating your trouble, and he shall do you justice."

He took the ring and placed it on his finger, and she caught his hand and pressed it to her lips and turned to go.

"Surely you do not intend to go alone. Let me walk near you—not with you for I am not worthy of that—and see you safe to your home."

"No, no," she said. "You must not go with me. I am safe alone."

She went out hastily, and he took down his sword and belt, put them on, and walked out quickly after her. Keeping the lady in sight but screening himself from her observation, he saw her turn away from the principal streets and turn toward the students' quarter of the city. Several squares from this, she met a group of roistering students, who were singing snatches of wild song, and making the air vocal with their outcries. The foremost among them, a long-haired, aristocratic, cruel-faced young man, stopped the lonely girl.

"Whom have we here?" he cried. "By'r lady, damsel, show thy face!"

She struggled to free herself.

"The fool knows not who you are, Louis," said one of his companions. "Whisper your name in her ear and it will quiet her, perhaps."

The young man, with a laugh, put out his hand to tear the vail from her face, when there came the rush of feet, a low, angry

cry, and the insulter rolled upon the pavement under the force of Emile Du Martin's powerful arm. The lady took the opportunity to escape, and left Emile facing the knot of angry young men. The one they had called Louis staggered to his feet, even Du Martin saw his face.

"My lord, is this yourself?" he cried, in surprise.

"Ha, Du Martin, my prince of jewelers! very well; I shall cut your heart out all the same, and you will at least have the felicity of dying by the hands of a noble. Stand back, all of you, and give the fellow fair play."

"My lord, remember your rank."

"I waive that; are you a coward?"

Emile's sword sprang from its scabbard at the word, and the two crossed blades. The others stood aside, as they dared not interfere with their young leader, and a short conflict took place. From the first it was plain that Emile was the better swordsman of the two, and he contented himself by acting on the defensive, although his antagonist left his guard open several times.

"Why don't you assault?" hissed Louis.

"You are playing for breath, you coward!"

"I will not bear that name again, even from you," said Emile.

"Lâche!" shrieked Louis, repeating the obnoxious word. It was too much. Emile made a forward spring, a quick movement of his dextrous wrist, and three inches of his steel showed behind the shoulder-blade of his enemy. The duel was at an end. Du Martin drew out the ensanguined steel, and, looking fiercely at the companions of the fallen man, turned upon his heel and left them, returning at once to his office, where he sat down patiently to wait.

Whom had he slain? Louis, the eldest son of Count de St. Verein, a man whose power was hardly less than that of Henry of France! He, a citizen, had shed the blood of a noble in open fight, and must take the consequences.

He had not long to wait, for there was a rattle of armed heels upon the pavement without, a hoarse order, and the door was thrown open, and a captain of guards entered the room.

"You are M. Emile Du Martin, the jeweler?"

"I am."

"Then read this which I give you. When it is read, come out at once. Make no attempt to escape, for the doors and windows are guarded."

"Now is the time!" he cried, aloud. "Farewell, all I have loved, and may God forgive me for this last sin."

He raised his hand, and the keen point touched the skin; but, at that moment, he heard a door opened at the end of the long corridor, and hastily concealed the knife. He would wait until the turnkey had made his rounds, and was again gone. The steps

of the light crept on imperceptibly,

nearing the fatal stone, and Du Martin felt that his hour was drawing nigh. He drew out the little blade and tried it upon his finger, and a wan smile passed over his face as the light struck.

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and gain her apartment in time to prevent discovery.

A moment's delay, now, would result in murderous consequences. A life depended upon her calmness, her immediate action—a life precious to her, even beyond her own, and she prayed Heaven to endow her with power so to act that she might save Victor—save him who was dearer than all things on earth.

A brief reflection suggested a course which she felt assured, would prove successful. Without taking time to lay off her things—without noticing the staring maid, who wondered greatly at her mistress' agitation—without other thought than the object before her, Pauline opened her escritoire, took up a pen, and hastily wrote a line. Folding, enveloping, directing the epistle, she handed it to her maid and bade her dispatch a servant with it speedily, to its direction.

Then the time which followed seemed a tormenting delay. The waste of a single second might, perchance, result fatally, and he, Victor, would be sacrificed! The suspense was terrible, the fears exacerbating, the situation well-nigh unbearable, and it required an almost superhuman effort to control her excitement and uneasiness.

At the moment when the note was delivered at the head-quarters of the London police there happened to be no member of the secret service on hand, and Joseph Fleet, returning from his interview with Calvert Herndon and Victor Hassan, being the first at the chief post, received the billet.

Diego Perez "she screamed, "you must do this deed, Marsha what I say!—you must not do it. It is not business of yours what my reason; but you must give it up!"

"Give my lord his money. Give it back to him. You shall not fulfill your bargain if I can help it!"

"Poh!" he grunted.

Having finished his supper, the bull-fighter arose, slapped on his broad hat, and threw his cloak over his shoulders.

"Where do you go now?" questioned Madge.

"It is no business of yours. Keep your place," was the brief, surly reply; and in a moment he had gone out; but the hall also left the miserable room, and followed close upon his footsteps.

Diego was in a disagreeable mood. He felt convinced that Madge Marks would defeat his plans, if possible. He glanced back over his shoulder, to see if he was being dogged, but could discern no one, owing to the general gloom which shrouded that section invariably after nightfall.

He continued on until he arrived before a decayed ranch, where poisonous liquors and slopy wine were the attraction for those who could only afford small investments in the vile beverages; and here he entered.

Diego was loth to partake of the fiery liquors here dispensed, yet, as there were no other shops on the by-route he proposed taking, in order to reach the — Hotel, and consequently no other opportunity obtain drink; and finally, that he desired a fiery stimulant in the undertaking he had agreed upon, therefore, he advanced to the counter and called for the best, which, at least, was no more than pure alcohol, slightly colored.

It was seldom his face appeared in this den; but the keeper knew him well, and was prompt to act so as to gain his good grace, considering the Spaniard's strength and friendship two valuable auxiliaries to the quietude of his house.

Diego Perez gulped down the sickening stuff, and having paid for it, turned to leave, when he was confronted by a face. It was a familiar face, with leering expression, with glaring eyes, Satanic in mold, disgreably swarthy. The stained, withered lips were screwed up in a ghastly smile; the dark orbs flashed an unfinishing stare; the owner stood there in a way that conveyed, clearly as words: "I am here!"

"Satan seize you, Madge Marks!" he cried, in an undertone, not caring that the few listeners should catch his utterance. "What brings you upon my track?"

"Thank Heaven! I hope you are sure. When—when can you—"

"Now, Right away—in a minute—in two minutes—in a jiffy!"

Pauline would have spoken further, but Fleet, fully recognizing the urgency of the case in hand, took his departure, saying:

"I'll fix this thing all right for you, Lady Blair—trust me for it," and in a moment, bowing, he quitted the room.

The detective hurried straightway to the Hotel. He had not expected to return there so soon—in the same evening; but, with the new duty before him, of placing the young man on his guard against a second attempt upon his life, then pending, he entered the hotel, and continued up stairs.

He had reached the floor on which were the rooms of our friends, when he was checked by an unexpected sight. That part of the house was quiet and deserted, yet the detective saw something which caused him to halt, and remain silent.

The suite engaged by the party of four was accessible through a narrow side passage, branching off from the main hall, and unlighted. There was a window at the opposite end to where Fleet stood, through which was dimly reflected the lights from the street without, and the pale stars.

But, faint though it was, it formed a background, against which was discernible the outline of a man. The detective saw that it was a man of heavy build, prodigious strength, and that he was enveloped in a long cloak.

He was leaning forward—was engaged in picking the lock of a door, and that the door to the room occupied by Victor Hassan as a sleeping apartment.

Fleet did not pause to ask himself who this could be, but concluded at once that his arrival was just in time to frustrate a murderous design.

Drawing back quickly in the recess of another door beside him, he took off his boots, and then he peered out, to see how far the would-be assassin had progressed in his labor.

The latter was no longer to be seen!

"Ah!" Fleet exclaimed, as he gilded along the entry, noiseless as a cat, and reached the door where he had seen the man at work.

The door was open. Passing around the jamb, he saw the intruder standing in the center of the apartment, his back toward Fleet, his eyes bent upon a couch wherein lay Victor, who had retired earlier than usual, and whose loud respiration at once told that he slept soundly.

The would-be assassin advanced step by step toward the bedside, concentrating his enormous strength to give the fatal blow. The shining steel missed and poised aloft.

"Thud!" something whizzed through the air, arrow-like, and with unerring precision, striking the wrench squarely upon the temple, causing him to stagger. Ere he could recover himself, there was a loud cry; he received another blow which felled him to the floor, and the cold muzzle of a pistol touched his temple.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TIGER PLAYS THE FOX.

We left Diego Perez in a state of mental stupefaction, insensible to an immediate realization of the unacceptable change in Madge Marks, which transformed her from the vulture to the dove. She protested against the bargain entered into by the bull-fighter, to murder Lord Victor Hassan B. It was strange!

He looked at her searchingly, a frown

settled on his brow. What interest had she in the youth whose life he was to take? Why should she interfere in his plans? What had produced this change in her vicious nature?

"Look ye, Madge—Marks," he cried, "what means this turn about? Are you mad? Then lie to Bedlam mad-house! Are you a fool? Then go to the asylum! I'll have none o' this baby-talk. Were you of the old Garduna with me, you would get a bath* for your weak heart! Are you so good of a sudden that you do not fear being choked in the smoke?†—or that you do not fear the jaws of the wolf? Bah! A grand serena you would make me!"

"Diego Perez," she screamed, "you must not do this deed, Marsha what I say!—you must not do it. It is not business of yours what my reason; but you must give it up!"

"Give my lord his money. Give it back to him. You shall not fulfill your bargain if I can help it!"

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"Hollo!" he cried, "what's this, now?

Where're you—I (hic) got to, eh? A nice house for Madge Marks to— to come into! Ho! (hic) again! Now, who—where're you—r're you?" pausing beside the Englishman, and looking him full in the face, her breath strongly perfumed by the bad whisky which she had swallowed.

"It is the Spaniard," he said.

"Not so," returned Blair, "for it is not his step. Who can it be? If a visitor, it is strange that no servant has preceded, and announced to me the name!"

Their alternate inquiries were answered in a few seconds. The comer halted at the door, and, turning the knob with a twist and a wrig, stood before them.

The first glance discovered that it was a woman; the second, that she was of disproportioned and masculine figure, with a visage of the devil, a glance of hate—an eye that leered, glared, flashed with basiflik light—a general mien of disgusting front. Her long, thick, black, wiry hair was knotted and twined in disorder; her clothes were wet, muddy, dusty, dirty, torn—as if she had rolled, first, in the gutter, then in an ash-heaps, finally rending her garments, as a pastime. Her poise was unsteady, as if aboard a ship at sea; she caught hold upon the door-jamb for support; then, with a reel, she strode forward.

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foolish idea was in my head, there came the moment when the master tone of the human heart was struck, and I began to know and feel, for the first time, what real love was. It flashed across me in all its brightness, in its overpowering strength—yes, it came—and the foolish fancy for the talking Bandit vanished into thin air before the voice of true affection."

"May I be so bold as to ask what the chap's name is, and so keep out of his way?" said Tom, in a husky tone.

"It wouldn't be easy for you to do that, dear Tom," she replied; "and I'm sure you don't want to."

"Do you really and truly mean me?"

"I do."

There were no more words, but there were equally demonstrative proofs of affection, and, for good quarter of an hour, silence.

"And you forgive my folly?"

"Yer really and truly mean to be Mrs. Tom Smith?" he cried, with his strong arms round her waist.

"I do—if."

"No 'if,' that's enough. That 'ere subject ventilated—so no more—let's shute."

It was time.

Dark, leaden clouds by this time covered three-quarters of the sky with a variety of fantastical forms, all hard and cutting at the edges, except where some lighter mass of grayish vapor floated over the general surface; over the lake could be seen one broad expanse of deep, lurid purple, with two or three streaks of fleecy white drawn across it.

"Lie close," said Tom; "I must be pow'ful quick; if the storm bu'sts, it's all up with shootin'."

Martha crouched low, while Tom, taking a leaf, put it to his mouth, and imitated the cry of the doe so admirably as to quite startle the girl.

"That's the way you deceive the poor deer?" she observed, in a hushed whisper.

"All's fair in love, war and huntin,'" grinned Tom; "but yer just look and don't talk, and you'll soon see some fun, or I'm a Dutchman of the Mohawk!"

Again and again Tom imitated the cry of the doe, until he began to think he must move further, when a dry stick was heard cracking at no great distance.

Tom Smith prepared his bow and arrow.

"But it was too heavy for any light creature," whispered Martha; "it sounds like the tread of man."

"No, Martha, dear, it was a buck. Look out yonder, where the light falls under the pine—that he comes." As he spoke, a noble buck walked out of the thicket, and, advancing with stately step, looked round for the doe. Behind this splendid animal were others, all bucks, but evidently either more wary or less amorous than the fine creature which greeted the hunter's view.

Again Tom, who was screened behind the oak-trunk, gave out his deceitful signal, which made the buck bend his head low to the ground, listening with deep attention, and then move closely and methodically across the lawn-like sward, followed, at a respectful distance, by his less lordly fellows.

Whizz—twang—and, leaping forward about a dozen paces, the buck fell on his knees, while two more, mortally wounded by two other shots, tried in vain to stagger away.

Then Tom rushed into the open space, and, with his long knife, put an end to their miseries.

Tom proceeded to cut up the deer, and hang it in quarters from boughs, out of reach of the wolves and other predatory animals, after which he again crossed the prairie with a view to reconnoiter. While engaged in conversation with Martha he had, to a certain extent, lost his way.

Now he neither wished to have half a dozen journeys between the camp and his game, which might betray their presence, nor did he wish to enter upon a wild-goose chase at night. It was important, then, to know the true direction of his companions, and this could only be done by catching a glimpse of the lake.

It was not difficult for him to do this, and, having discovered the sheet of water, he at once detected the gully by which he had come, and had made a sign to Martha, silent and obedient as an Indian squaw, to follow him, when a sudden and alarming sound came upon his ears.

Up that very gully he heard distinctly the sound of a very heavy body of men silently threading their way through the woods, while voices as of men who knew themselves at home rose on the night air.

"Follow me, if you love your life," he said, and plunged into a dense thicket of young chestnuts, shoving aside the branches of the exuberant shoots carefully, until they both appeared safely screened from the sight of the enemy.

Tom had so arranged his cover that with little difficulty he could overlook the ascent, up which he now saw a whole cloud of dark and painted warriors coming, moving in the easy, careless way of denizens of safe territory.

"Oh, my poor venison!" said Tom, in a hushed whisper.

Now, had Tom said any thing about his head or his scalp, or the tortures he might have to suffer if captured, Martha in all likelihood would have been silent; but his doleful exclamation over his deer's meat quite upset her gravity, and she gave a smothered laugh, despite the fearful danger they were in.

"Snakes!" cried Tom. "What's up? That're laugh of yours is mighty poopy; but lor', it mout cost our top-knots. This way!"

And using as much caution as a red-skin could have done, the young hunter began retreating, with his face to the enemy, holding poor terrified and alarmed Martha by the hand.

That the Indians had heard the laugh was evident, for they hushed their voices instantly, and then they could be heard running up the hill, and beating the bushes as yet under the impression that it was some animal.

Then an ominous cry rose from amid the thicket of chestnut trees, proclaiming that the Indians had discovered the footsteps of human beings and of white men.

"That's just my luck," said Tom. "Cuss it, I never loved a woman afore; I never got nobody to love me afore; and now, just as I was going to be happy, them cusses come and stick their noses in the way."

"What is to be done?"

"Well, you see, I've got these here two poguns—they's good for two lives, and maybe the rumpus may rouse the camp, in which case there'll be a rumpus—when it's as likely as not we two can vanoose."

"But may not all the objects of the expedition be lost?" asked Martha.

"Exactly," said Tom; "and I only mentioned it to show what might be done. Now I cave in to you, and this is my notion; let's run. Be mortal frightened, and when we git to a good locality, turn and surrender, bold as brass. We've lost our way in the hills. I'm a young trapper—stole a girl for a wife, and ain't pertickler fond of getting into settlements again. You understand?"

"I do; but what will they do?"

"Well, they won't hurt you, and it's my opinion the worst thing they can put me to will be hooin' and workin'."

And with these words, clutching Martha's hand, he commenced a headlong career among the bushes, which soon brought a large party in pursuit.

When the Indians were close at hand, Tom suddenly folded his arms across his chest, leaned against a tree, and awaited the Shawnees. Martha cowered at his feet. In another minute they were surrounded by the whole party, who examined them with singular curiosity.

"What are you doing in our hills?" asked one of the chiefs.

"I am a pale-face, but my heart is red. I stole this girl from her parents, and have been wandering about two moons, in search of Theanderigo, the Black Hawk of the Shawnees."

"What has my brother done with his fire-bow?"

"Broken in a fight with a bear," said Tom, showing his collar of bear's claws, of which he was not a little proud; "but the pale-face warrior killed him."

"Wagh!" said the chief, admiringly.

A brief consultation was now held, after which it was announced to the young man that he would be taken prisoner with his wife into the camp, but without any indignity being offered, to await the decision of Theanderigo.

When, however, the village was reached, nothing was thought of but the joy of being reunited, and then of feasting, so that the young couple had a wigwam assigned to them, which Tom Smith entered with a comic and amused glance, while Martha did the same, half-terrified and alarmed, but with a radiant blush of outraged modesty that made her quite charming.

"Feels like home," said Tom, with a grin. "Most like husband and wife."

"Does it?" replied Martha, a little tartly.

"It may to you, but I don't feel at all like home; and if you talk any nonsense to me, it's likely we never shall be husband and wife."

"It's only my fun," said Tom.

"How can you talk so," whispered Martha, shuddering, "when we are in the power of these wretches?"

"But say are Miss Ella and Miss Etzie," put in Tom Smith, thoughtfully.

"True: who knows but this may be the work of Providence to help us to see them?"

"I say, Martha," said Tom, "I'm powerful hungry and dry. These Indians are full of game; I'll go and get some."

With that Tom strode to a fire, where several of his captors sat. As he advanced, all were silent.

"My brothers have venison. The pale-face is hungry. He will give three deer to the feast if they will help him now."

"The meat is for all; eat. Where does my brother keep his deer?"

Tom minutely described the spot, and several boys and lads started to fetch the plunder, which when they returned with, the scout rose wonderfully high in their opinions. But Smith went away to his wigwam and supped with his wife, unconscious of his sudden glory.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MYSTERIOUS MURDER.

The captivity of Tom and Martha, while obliging the Avengers to be excessively cautious, made them also, exceedingly anxious to discover the fate of the unlucky scout. Victims not taken in war, were often either adopted into the tribe, treated as slaves, or kept for the torture. Both Kenawa and Steve were well aware that a festival of the Shawnees was near at hand, which, if the Indians were bent on any of their devilries, they would be sure to have always known him.

By the time that Steve, following in the track of the bandit, had reached a kind of plain, or expanse of table land, about a couple of miles from the Indian village, and three from the encampment of the Avengers, the twilight was darkening in the west, and faintly stealing through tangled thickets and along lonely ridges. The ruddy light of evening, bursting from clouds of crimson and purple, and shooting down through gaps of the hills in cascades of fire, fell brightly and sweetly on the lake below, on the clumps of trees, on the fairy river, winding along from side to side, now hiding beneath the shadow of the hills, now glancing into light.

Steve, still keeping his eye on the trail left by the robber, hurried onward, no sense of the hour, of fatigue, of hunger, or of thirst, checking his progress.

Suddenly he gave a quick, low, involuntary cry.

The robber's track changed all at once from the steady, heavy steps of a man pursuing his way on some purpose bent, to that of one who ran hither and thither as if in pursuit of some one.

A little foot, moccasined, but small and well-made, could now be seen commingling with that of the border ruffian.

"Tarnation snakes!" cried Steve, "surely he ain't found one of them gals, or Martha?"

But no time was to be wasted. Night was coming on quickly, and already many precious minutes had been lost. The trail was fearfully distinct, as, after a very short delay, he came to where the ruffian had come up to the girl. A fearful struggle had ensued; for all round a small open space the earth was trodden into; boughs had been snapped asunder, bushes broken, leaves scattered about, and every evidence given that one, probably the girl, had fought desperately in defense of her life and honor.

Steve clenched his teeth, and pursued his way.

But a silent horror fell upon his soul as he now saw that the footmarks were only those of one man, while after him he dragged something heavy; here, too, were evidences of violence and struggling; small boughs were torn down, as if grasped by some resisting wretch who was dragged for ciby along. The ground still showed the prints of feet.

Then came another green and grassy glade, where once more there were evidences of a struggle; where the small space of ground had been much trampled; where, amid the withered leaves, were signs of the scene.

Steve looked fearfully about. The evening had now quite closed in; the darkening of the atmosphere, the hoarse sighs of the wind through the naked pine-trees, the rustling of the leaves which strewed the glades, gave a dismal sublimity to the scene.

Then came a low howl, as of dogs who have discovered something which induces them to moan and bay as if half terrified.

Steve looked up, and at no great distance saw the turkey-buzzards collecting on the tops of some trees close at hand. Advancing slowly, with a heart sick with horror—where women are concerned the tenderness of these men is almost incredible—Steve soon saw two small Indian dogs standing, pointing, as it were, at a low pool round which grew some reeds, while above were congregated, on a blasted pine, some half-dozen birds of ill omen, flapping their wings, and apparently ready for their horrid meal.

The latter sound, however, was not renewed, and the scout, therefore, bent his

whole energies to watch what he supposed would prove the game he was in search of.

Nor had he long to wait for a confirmation of his suspicions. The bushes moved, and, with an inward prayer that his gun might not betray him to his enemies, he let fly, and the deer rolled to the edge of the stream. In less time than it takes to describe, the hunter was upon the animal, and busily engaged in slaughtering and cutting it up, with all the art of an experienced butcher.

The whole animal was then strung on his shoulders, carried some distance toward the lake, and there hung upon a fir-tree, out of reach of the hungry wolves, who, scenting their prey afar off, are always ready to devour and destroy.

He then determined to make the best of his way down to the lake, hoping to meet with Kenawa, in whose company he would return to console and refresh his comrades.

It was at this moment that he missed the knife with which he cut up the deer. A red flush rose into the hunter's cheeks, alreadily tanned by sun and wind, as he reflected on his own carelessness.

This knife had been his for twelve years,

had his name on a plate let into its buck-

horn handle, and he would not willingly

have lost it for the price of a new rifle.

With a muttered imprecation on his own folly, he clutched his firelock, and started on his way back, quite satisfied that, under any circumstances, he had left it where he had killed and cut up the deer.

He knew the way back well, and knew,

also, that it was no great distance; therefore, after looking to the priming of his rifle, he turned his steps, and soon came in sight of the spot where lay the antlers, head, skin and offal of the deer, as yet untouched by the scavengers of the woods. Steve walked close up to the pile, looked carefully about, turned over the remains of the deer. No!

But, ere a moment had elapsed, the scout

found that which he was not in search of—a foot-print on the bank, which was not his own—the foot-print of a large and coarsely made moccasin.

"Thunder!" muttered Steve, to himself,

"if that ain't the mark of one of them

thieving niggers, the Hornes, my eyes have

quite lost their sight. Shouldn't wonder if the thief had got the knife, curse him! I'll foller him, and, if I catches him, I expect he'll better look after his top-knot!"

While uttering these remarks, Steve was examining the ground, and soon found that the man, whoever he was, was now ascending the hill in the direction both of their own hiding-place and the Indian camp, having previously crossed the little stream exactly where the deer had been killed.

Steve then recollects the noise he had

heard, and was only sorry that, in his anxiety to procure food for his companions, he had neglected the opportunity of punishing

one of the accused Robbers of the Scioto.

He was now, however, on his track, and, such is human nature, in part impelled by the loss of his knife, Steve dashed up the hill at a rapid pace, forgetting for a moment that caution which was so essential a part of the stock-in-trade of a scout. Reason, however, soon resumed its sway, and ten minutes the ranger was the same calm, collected and calculating hunter that we have always known him.

By the time that Steve, following in the track of the bandit, had reached a kind of plain, or expanse of table land, about a couple of miles from the Indian village, and three from the encampment of the Avengers, the twilight was darkening in the west, and faintly stealing through tangled thickets and along lonely ridges. The ruddy light of evening, bursting from clouds of crimson and purple, and shooting down through gaps of the hills in cascades of fire, fell brightly and sweetly on the lake below, on the clumps of trees, on the fairy river, winding along from side to side, now hiding beneath the shadow of the hills, now glancing into light.

Steve, still keeping his eye on the trail left by the robber, hurried onward, no sense of the hour, of fatigue, of hunger, or of thirst, checking his progress.

Suddenly he gave a quick, low, involuntary cry.

The robber's track changed all at once from the steady, heavy steps of a man

pursuing his way on some purpose bent, to that of one who ran hither and thither as if in pursuit of some one.

A little foot, moccasined, but small and

well-made, could now be seen commingling

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A HUMOROUS MAN.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

There was a man in our town
With such a merry soul,
He never so thought but laugh,
He was so wondrous' droll,
He laughed asleep, and laughed awake—
At rest or on the run;
He laughed at funerals and fairs—
At all things said and done.
I went a wild-goose once,
And gave him in a crowd
While he was in a jolly mood,
And laughing long and loud,
He read the first book ever twice,
His face was out of joint,
He turned to me and said, "Young man,
I'd like to see the point!"
The second made him serious;
His under lip drew down;
He sat down once again,
And then began to frown.
Right earnestly he read the third,
And looked around and swore,
And then put on his spectacles
And read it once again.
The fourth verse troubled him to read;
He heaved a long-drawn sigh;
The fifth brought misery to his face,
And tears drops to his eye.
The sixt brought him to him quite,
His tender heart it broke!
He looked in agony around
And fell beneath the stroke;
But, ere he died, he looked at me,
And these were his last words:
"Young man, don't put a joke in rhyme
Until you've got the joke!"
We buried him with trembling hands,
And sadly weeping eyes;
And I'll long remember him—though I've
Forgotten his advice.

Bound to a Log.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

THREE men were sitting around a tiny fire, built in a small hut that nestled far down amidst tall, towering cliffs and mountains. Built beneath the low-hanging boughs of a wide-spreading live-oak, of brush and dead wood, the rude cabin seemed, from a short distance, part and parcel of the tree.

From the hill heights, the dense foliage screened the hut from view. From the valley alone could it be seen, and, even then, might well have been mistaken for a brush-heap or wind-fail.

This lone hut had, as stated, three occupants, all of the masculine gender. Though comrades, and apparently friends, there was a great dissimilarity in the trio.

One, young, handsome, of pleasing countenance and symmetrical form, whose language denoted an educated man. This was Clyde Owens.

One, of heavy, massive build, with bulk neck and head—a face bearing the unmistakable imprints of vice and dissipation. This was Jared Clark.

The other, bony frame. A long, half-peevish face, small blue eyes, sandy hair and beard. A man easily led, by those of more decisive character, to do either good or evil deeds. One of those persons so aptly described as "nobody's enemy but their own."

Such was Obed Scranton.

"Twas a lucky stroke, that one of yours, Jared," said Clyde, as the trio turned from their rude meal, and igniting their well-blackened pipes, sat in comfortable positions before the fire, whose grateful warmth filled the hut. "It will make our fortunes."

"That's mighty little for three men," growled the swarthy Hercules, an ugly glare in his treacherous black eyes, as he stared, moodily, into the fire.

"A good deal, I should say. You found the 'pocket' yesterday morning. Since then we have taken out over one hundred and fifty pounds weight, and no sign of its failing yet. Twenty thousand, at least, and plenty more where it came from."

"Good 'nough for one—not for three."

"What do you mean, Clark? You remember our agreement? Share and share alike!"

"It was a fool piece o' business, my makin' it. Ef I hadn't, I'd a' bin a rich man, now!" growled the miner.

"If you had not, you would never have found the pocket. You would have starved to death, man."

"I know you helped me a little when I was down after the tussle 'th the grizzly, but it don't look overly right, Clyde Owens, to be a-pokin' it in a feller's teeth every minnit."

"Come, boys, I reckon it's time to turn in. We must work like blazes ontel we git that pocket clared out. No tellin' who might chance along, and then the whole country would be crowded from the lower mines," said Scranton, with an uneasy look at Clark.

"You're right, Obe," said Clyde, knocking the ashes from his pipe, and arising. "You're not mad, Jared?"

A low growl was the only answer, and the sullen miner roughly shook off the hand that rested lightly upon his shoulder.

"Good-night, then, and I hope you will wake up in the morning in a better humor, Clark," laughed the young man, as he spread his blanket, and lying down, feet toward the fire, rolled himself up, and closed his eyes.

A smile of contented joy rested upon his face, and pleasant visions filled his mind. A dainty little form seemed before him, and loving words upon her lips. The vision of the true-hearted girl who was, patiently as might be, awaiting his coming home from the land of gold.

His mind filled with joyous plans for the future, that now seemed very bright, Clyde fell asleep, little dreaming of the fearful peril that threatened him so near.

The forms of the two miners still crouched by the dying fire, that revealed the interior of the hut but indistinctly. Occasionally a glance would pass between them, full of a deep and deadly meaning.

Those of Clark were dark and vindictive, those of Scranton were hesitating and remorseful. His heart was evidently not hardened as that of his comrade.

"He's asleep."

"Yes. But must we do it, Clark? Won't you give it up?" returned Obed, in a wistful tone.

"You're a fool, man! What right has he to what I find? It will be full twenty thousand apiece. Shall he hev it? No! It's our'n—he's got no right to it."

"As much so as I have. You might as well say that of me."

"But, you're a decent feller, an' he ain't. I like you—I don't him," muttered the miner; but there was an evil look in his downcast eyes, that belied his words.

Had Scranton caught it, he would have trembled. It would have told him that his life, also, was in danger.

"I can't do it, Clark—don't ask me!" muttered Obed, the drops of perspiration standing thick upon his brow.

A smothered report followed, and as the

"You must—you hev sw'ared to do it. You won't back out now? Go, git the cords. You know me. If you crawfish now—" and there was a meaning expression in the glowing eyes, that caused the weaker minded man to shudder, as he turned away to obey.

His soul revolted at the part he was about to play, but his will could not resist that of Clark. He was fully under the other's influence, and could not break the bonds.

Scranton noiselessly left the hut, and speedily returned, bearing long strips of twisted deer-skin, that had evidently been prepared for the case. Then the Herculean miner arose.

"Now, tie him—I'll hold the cuss!" he growled, as he sprang upon the sleeping man.

Clyde, taken by surprise, offered but little resistance, and ere he comprehended the situation, he was firmly bound, hand and foot.

Then Clark arose, and drawing a knife, would have sheathed it in the prisoner's bosom, but his hand had been stayed by the grasp of Scranton.

"What do you mean, cuss ye?" he snarled furiously.

"Not that, Jared—don't kill him. Do as you promised, or you must fight me, too," was the low but firm reply.

Clark glared at him in wondering astonishment. Was this the phant tool he had known? This man whose eye glittered steadily, and whose hand rested upon his knife?

"Clark—Obed, what does this mean?" cried Clyde, in surprise.

"Jest this, my boy. You're in our way, an' as you didn't know enough to git outen it o' your own accord, we're goin' to help ye," grinned the ruffian Clark.

"For what? How have I injured you? What have I done to deserve this?"

"Nothin' much; on'y Obe 'nd me thinks as how there'll be more of we on'y hev two shar' in the pocket. So we tend to put you out o' the way."

"You will not murder me? You're only joking, Clark?"

"Am I? A sober bit o' fun this is, as you'll find. But we won't murder you—thank Obe for that. I'd a' done it, on'y he would n't hear to it. We'll jest take you to the water an' set you adrift. Sorter ship you back to the gal whose pictur' I seed' you kiss t'other day."

For a moment Clyde was speechless. He

had some difficulty in getting his voice.

"I'm bound to a log," he said.

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